

Annette Locke
At Home America

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Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing this letter because I am concerned about the proposed Business Opportunity Rule R511993. I believe that in its present form, it could prevent me from continuing as a DIRECT SELLING CONSULTANT. I understand that part of the FTC's responsibilities is to protect the public from "unfair and deceptive acts or practices," yet some of the sections in the proposed rule will make it very difficult, if not impossible, for me to sell At Home America products.

I have been a DIRECT SELLING CONSULTANT with At Home America for almost two years. Originally, I became a CONSULTANT in my company because I was laid off from my job of 20 years. I felt the products were exceptional and I wanted to earn some additional income. I am a mother of two children of school age who are very young and my family is supported through my direct selling business. The future of my family is dependent on the stability of the direct selling industry. I love the fact that I can work from home and be able to get my children off of the school bus each day and take care of them instead of putting them into daycare or having someone else watch them. I am their mother and want to be able to raise them and not have someone else do it who wouldn't be up to my high standards anyway.

One of the most confusing and burdensome sections of the proposed rule is the seven-day waiting period to enroll new consultants. At Home America's sales kit only costs \$29.99. People buy TVs, cars, and other items that cost much more and they do not have to wait seven days. This waiting period gives the impression that there might be something wrong with the company or the compensation plan. I also think this seven-day waiting period is unnecessary, because At Home America already has a 95% buyback policy for all products including sales kits purchased by a salesperson within the last twelve months. Under this waiting period requirement, I will need to keep very detailed records when I first speak to someone about At Home America and will then need to send in many reports to my company headquarters.

The proposed rule also calls for the release of **any** information regarding lawsuits involving misrepresentation, or unfair or deceptive practices. It does not matter if the company was found innocent. Today, anyone or any company can be sued for almost anything. It does not make sense to me that I would have to disclose these lawsuits unless At Home America was found guilty. Otherwise, At Home America and I are put at an unfair advantage even though At Home America has done **nothing** wrong.

Finally, the proposed rule requires the disclosure of a minimum of 10 prior purchasers nearest to the prospective purchaser. I am glad to provide references, but in this day of

identity theft, I am VERY uncomfortable giving out the personal information of individuals (without their approval) to strangers. Also, giving away this information could damage the business relationship of the references who may be involved in other companies or businesses including those of competitors. In order to get the list of the 10 prior purchasers, I will need to send the address of the prospective purchaser to At Home America's headquarters and then wait for the list. I also think the following sentence required by the proposed rule will prevent many people from wanting to sign up as a salesperson - "If you buy a business opportunity from the seller, your contact information can be disclosed in the future to other buyers." People are very concerned about their privacy and identity theft. They will be reluctant to share their personal information with individuals they may have never met.

I appreciate the work that the FTC does to protect consumers, yet I believe this proposed new rule has many unintended consequences and there are less burdensome alternatives available to achieving your goals.

Thank you for your time in considering my comments.

Respectfully,
Annette Locke